

UNCLAS HARARE 001035

SIPDIS

AF/PD FOR COX AND ROBERTSON, AF/S FOR KRAFT AND SCHLACHTER, AF/RA FOR DIPALMA, INR/R/MR, NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER

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TAGS: ZI PREL PHUM

SUBJECT: STANDARD EDITOR BIDS FAREWELL, URGES ZIMBABWEANS TO CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD DEMOCRACY

¶1. Under the title "A luta continua" ("the struggle continues") the independent weekly "The Standard's" April 18 editorial was a farewell from editor March Chavhunduka and a call for Zimbabwe to continue seeking democracy. Chavhunduka, who was tortured by Zimbabwean military authorities in early 1999 for publishing an article alleging an attempted coup in the Zimbabwean Army, has edited the newspaper since its launch in ¶1997. He has recently acquired Thompson Publishing Company and will leave the "Standard" to take over management of his new company. Chavhunduka was an IV grantee in 1992. Excerpts:

¶2. ". . .Despite all the trials and tribulations that I and colleagues have gone through and at the hands of an increasingly intolerant and paranoid regime, and having suffered the same injustices as thousands of Zimbabweans, many of whose stories have never hit newspaper headlines, I strongly believe that all Zimbabweans who cherish the ideals of a free, open and democratic society should close ranks to fight to the end the lawlessness, corruption, and anarchy prevailing in the country. There is power in numbers. No amount of twisting election results or murdering of people can sustain an illegitimate government forever, and so it is important that Zimbabweans not lose hope over the outcome of one presidential or parliamentary election, but continue to stand firm and united in the demand for the country to return to civilized normalcy. Once anarchy sets in among the people, then that is tantamount to handing the country over to the devil on a silver platter. We at 'The Standard' can safely say we have consistently played our part in this endeavor, and it is my hope and belief that the paper will continue along the path, despite the minefields ahead. The paper will not falter. . . We remain together in the struggle for peace and justice."

SULLIVAN